I am saddened to hear the the FCC approved additional government
regulations on the use of television signals sent over the public
air waves. The new rules mandate that digital transmissions are
less flexible to the end user than the traditional analog signals.
This is the opposite of what new technology is supposed to
accomplish.

I question why redistribution of a signal which is intended to be
received by anyone with a receiver is a problem worth this much
government interference. Is information sent over the public
air waves not intended for use by the public? I also question the
effectiveness of a broadcast flag. I suspect the people who would
redistribute are still going to find a way to do so even with the
mandated controls and restrictions in place.

As with many copy-prevention schemes, the people who will be most
affected are the legal end users who will be forced to upgrade
their equipment and will be prevented from transferring data from
one format to another. The end users which do not respect the
law will not respect these requirements either.

The other group I am concerned about are software developers. I
do not see how software which is distributed in source code format
can meet the new FCC requirements. This is not a theoretical
problem because such software already exists and supports HDTV.
See the "GNU Radio" software radio receiver and projects like
"Myth TV" which allow people to create their own personal video
recorders.

Sincerely,
Ross Combs